

20 People, 16 Hours, 10 Games: Using Python, PyGame & EasyGui for a Games Programming Schooling

Posted on [May 31, 2010](#) by [Horst JENS](#) at the Pythongamebookblog at:
<http://Pythongamebook.wordpress.com/2010/05/31/20-people-16-hours-10-games/>

On the last weekend of May 2010 I taught in a school about game programming for 20 people of [Bupp](#), Austria's state-run Game rating agency.

Using [ThePythonGameBook](#) and a remastered version of [Ubuntu Linux 10.4](#), the schooling took place at [Area 52](#) in [Vienna](#), a location specialized to host lan-partys and gaming presentations.



Photo 1: Using a remixed Ubuntu 10.4 live CD

I found out that some computers were not able to boot from [USB stick](#) and some were not able to boot from DVD. And I completely messed up my remixing [tool UCK](#) after remastering the first version. Finally only one PC needed to boot using a prepared USB stick and i provided all participants with a live-DVD (Ubuntu 10.4 with PyGame and some other

tools installed) and an non-bootable USB stick with examples from [ThePythonGamebook](#) and other tutorials like the excellent [A byte of Python](#) from Swaroop HC.

It was the first major field test for ThePythonGameBook using an adult audience. After an 4-hour crash-course into Python-programming (more than the half of the audience had no programming experience at all) the participants were able to create simple point-and-click adventures using the ingenious [EasyGui module](#) from [Steve Ferg](#).

After the crash-course into Python programming, I let the audience practically read ThePythonGameBook at their own pace and only helped out at demand.

The participants of the schooling formed 2-person teams and had the task to produce one playable game at the schoolings end. It was their choice to use only Python (text), EasyGui, PyGame or a combination of those.

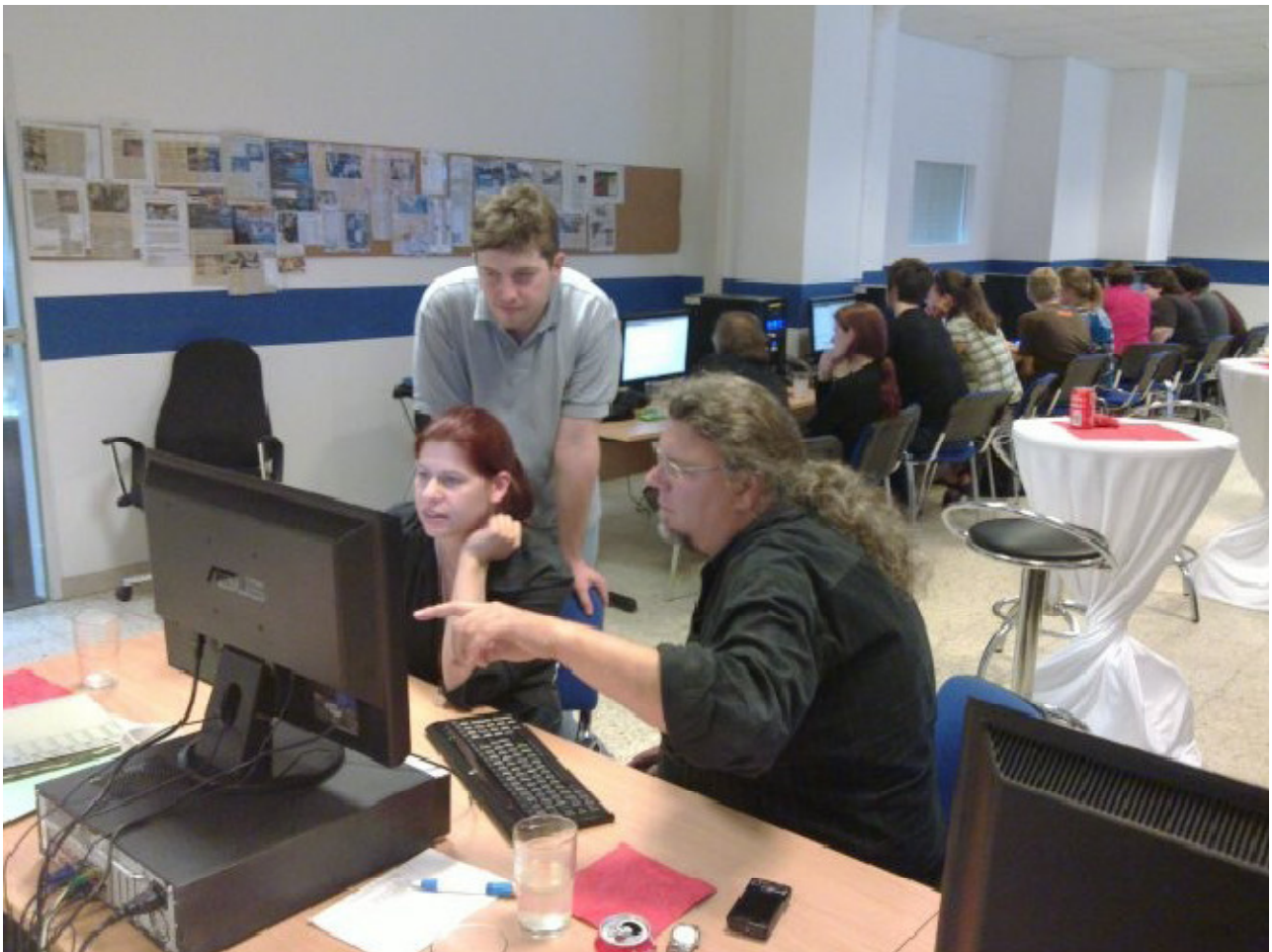


Photo 2: Herbert Rosenstingl (from BuPP) pointing at the source code of an EasyGui adventure game

Sadly I forgot to point out to only use creative-commons licensed graphics and sound, so participants of the schooling used good-looking pictures found at google from questionable origin. This inhibits me from using the created games on my homepage or in

ThePythonGameBook. However I will re-program some of the game ideas using free graphics and sounds.

At the end of the schooling, all participants presented their own game and voted for the other games (the winning teams got small prizes).

I was very curious how ThePythonGameBook would work as an learning book. Some flaws in the concept become apparent – like too late introduction of PyGame sprites and too complicated sprite classes. I generally like the approach of using PyGame surfaces first and introducing the more complex (classes, object-oriented programming) PyGame sprites later. But now i think of adding a “the same example done with sprites” section to each surface-only example. Maybe even before introducing the sprite class at all.

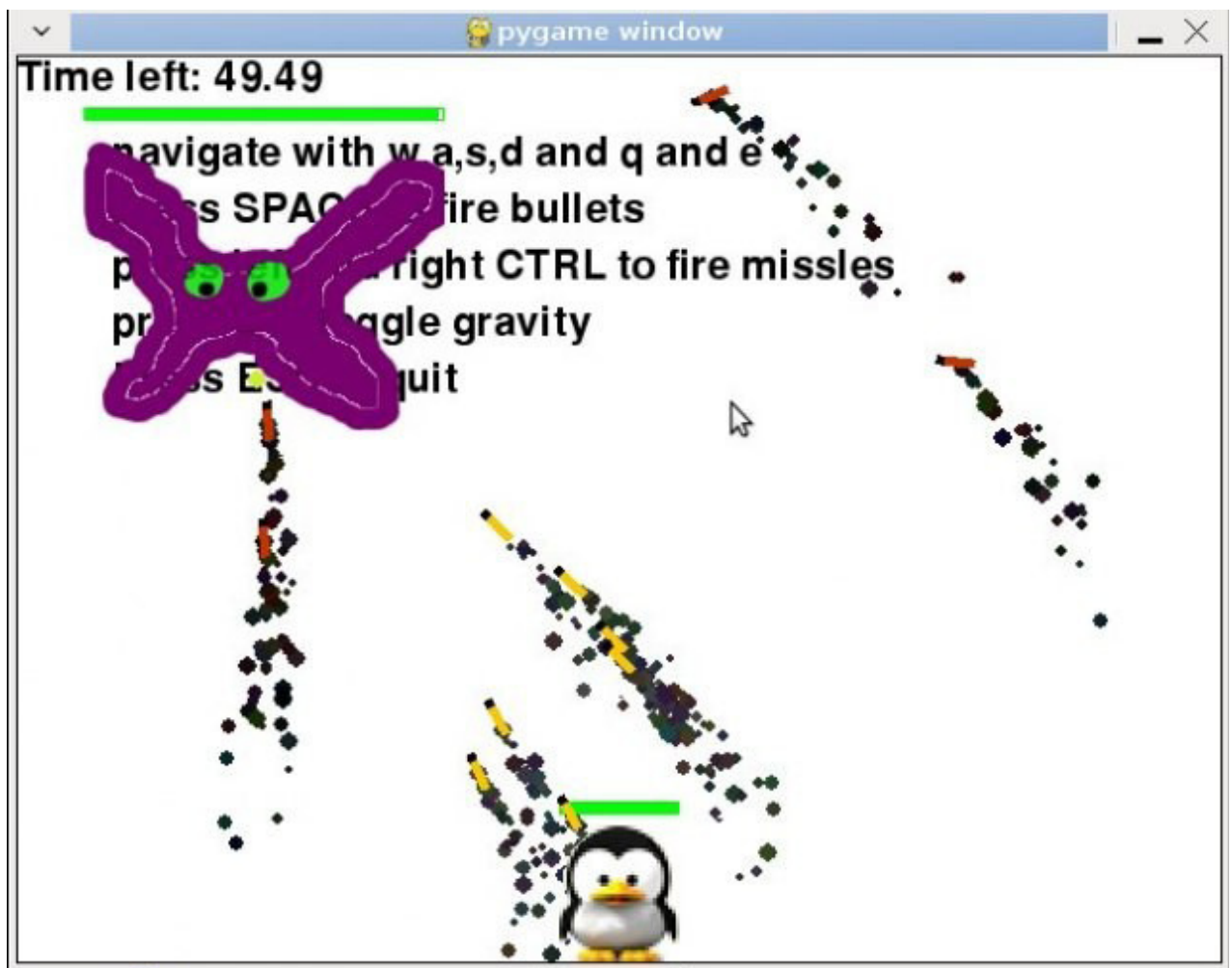


Photo 3: homing missiles example from ThePythonGameBook.com

My newest addition to ThePythonGameBook, an [example game](#) of penguins shooting homing rockets at each other was not mature enough to be used meaningful in the schooling. However one team had a very creative idea of combining a classic pong game with a pinball mechanic.. I will try to make this concept into an working example game.

Another insight I got from the schooling was that i need to write my PyGame examples as generic functions (like for displaying text or playing sound) so that users with minimal Python knowledge can use them from other programs without caring about PyGame' s complexity. This worked to same level, a team wrote a game using EasyGui and the [Flytext function](#) of ThePythonGameBook to display “Game Over” or status messages.

It was a very nice and productive weekend. Most laughs got an “[South-park](#)” inspired game were poor [Kenny](#) has to avoid (at first) one bouncing ball or he explode, with the number of balls increasing insanely.

Other teams concentrated on modding existing examples of ThePythonGameBook – it is incredible how much far better the “same” game looks after some work with graphics and sound effects.

Some participants took existing PyGame games found in the internet and merged them with their own ideas, like a combination of [Hangman](#) with the [Snake game](#)... really cool.



Photo 4: Teams working on their games



Photo 5: Presentation of the games. Photo by Herbert Rosenstingl. Horst JENS is third person from the right (black-yellow T-Shirt)

Result: Thanks to the participants of the schooling, I'm full of cool fresh ideas for ThePythonGameBook and highly motivated to write more. Thanks, guys !